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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/05/2016
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SUBJECT: FM SHAIKH KHALID REQUESTS INFORMATION ON IRAN
PACKAGE

REF: MANAMA 976

Classified By: Ambassador William T. Monroe. Reason: 1.4 (B)(D)

¶1. (C) Summary and action request. Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid has requested further information on the components of the package of incentives for Iran, and especially on the political component which Bahrain understands is aimed at giving Iran recognition as a regional player. He asked that information be provided before the GCC's June 10 meeting on Iran, which he hopes will result in a clear and unified position. Embassy would appreciate any points that can be passed to the Foreign Minister on the morning of June 10 before he travels to Riyadh. End summary and action request.

¶2. (C) Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, during a June 5 meeting with the Ambassador, said that he was very disappointed that he would not be able to stop by Washington June 9 to see the Secretary. He still plans to attend the June 8 election of Shaikha Haya as President of the UN General Assembly, but now has to rush back to be able to attend the June 10 "secret" meeting of GCC Foreign Ministers in Riyadh for further discussions on Iran (reftel). He hopes he will be able to reschedule a trip to Washington, possibly in the fall during the UNGA. He stressed the importance of the U.S.-Bahrain relationship, and the need to cooperate together in many different fields.

¶3. (C) Regarding the June 10 meeting in Riyadh (which is not being announced to minimize press attention and speculation), Shaikh Khalid stated that the GCC members want to take a clear and united stand on Iran. Bahrain understands that the package of incentives will be delivered June 6, but is not clear on the details. They have heard that it consists of three parts -- assistance to Iran's civilian nuclear program, an economic package (which Bahrain supports), and a political component (which Bahrain knows little about). "It would be very helpful," Shaikh Khalid said, "if the GCC countries, who are your allies and who are most concerned about Iran and what it could do in the region, could have a clear understanding of the package before we reconvene on Saturday."

¶4. (C) In a separate meeting with A/DCM, Assistant Undersecretary Shaikh Abdul Aziz spelled out in more detail Bahrain's concerns about the political component, which it understands as giving Iran recognition as a main player in the region. "There is no doubt that Iran is a major regional player," Shaikh Abdul Aziz stated, "but what is meant by international recognition of Iran's regional position? We don't know what's there." He urged that regional countries be consulted on this point. Bahrain fears Iranian hegemony in the region. Before there was a policy of dual containment of Iran and Iraq. Now Iraq is not a player. Bahrain would appreciate clarification of what is envisioned in terms of recognition of Iran's regional political position.

15. (C) Shaikh Khalid said that the U.S. can count on the GCC countries. "We are your allies, and we will be with you," he stated. He said the GCC countries are insecure about Iran, not just because of the nuclear issue, which is in fact an international concern, but for other things they are doing regionally, including encouraging sectarian strife and meddling in Iraq.

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